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ML shares future plans during annual Roadmap Review

by Timothy R. Anderl, Materials and Manufacturing Directorate

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AFB, Ohio — Leaders from industry, government and academia gathered at the Dayton Convention Center July 17-19 to participate in the Air Force Research Laboratory's 2001 Materials and Manufacturing Directorate Roadmap Review.

The purpose of this annual review was to provide information concerning the directorate's planned fiscal 2002 technology programs. The review offered participants insight into planned Air Force materials and manufacturing research and development activities, and the opportunity to offer suggestions and ideas on future directorate research and development efforts.

"The review allows us the opportunity to communicate our future research and development goals to industry," said Reynaldo Carranza, AFRL's Materials and Manufacturing Directorate Roadmap Review organizer. "It allows them to see where we are spending our time, energy and money."

AFRL Commander Maj. Gen. Paul D. Nielsen welcomed attendees and provided them with the laboratory's perspective on science and technology.

"Science is a full-contact, team sport. By collaborating tightly on present and future challenges we prove that we are good and responsible scientists and engineers," Nielsen said. "This conference is extremely important because we will use the input we gather to produce science and technology miracles that affect the whole country."

Each day, breakout workshops offered the opportunity to learn more about specific technology areas pursued by directorate researchers. Workshops were conducted on the directorate's core technology areas. Industry input was solicited on topics such as Air Expeditionary Force Technologies, ManTech Strategic Plan, Materials and Processes for Sensors, Metals/Ceramics, Nonmetals, Small Business Innovative Research, and Systems Support.

"These workshops are invaluable because they allow our program managers and project engineers to have two-way discourse with peers in industry concerning our programs," Carranza said. "This open communication allows the directorate and attendees to foster a relationship and to answer important questions, which could lead to solutions to future technical challenges."

Materials and Manufacturing Directorate Director Charles Browning gave an overview of the directorate's mission of helping industry maintain an affordable and effective defense materials and manufacturing capability. Directorate engineers also dis-



2001 ROADMAP REVIEW — Air Force Research Laboratory's Maj. Gen. Paul D. Nielsen addresses attendees of Roadmap Review.

cussed program accomplishments, presented planning activities and future new starts, and provided direction and guidance to the defense materials and manufacturing community.

The SBIR industry event allowed researchers to share with attendee's topics for aerospace materials research and development that require innovative solutions. Each year, the Air Force identifies a number of challenging areas in aerospace and research that require inventive, "out-of-the-box" solutions.

The SBIR program allows small business to compete for research funding and help solve these technical and scientific challenges. Information and strategies that industry participants gathered at the meeting will assist them in submitting strong, competitive, and cost-effective proposals on fiscal year 2002 topics.

"Our workforce of civilian, military, industry, and academic researchers conduct exploratory, basic and advanced development research that meets the needs of the Air Force as we face the 21st century," Browning said. "As a full spectrum, pervasive organization, collaboration, interaction and networking are our themes during the Roadmap Review and throughout the year." @